

NEWTONVILLE CHARETTE

June 2-13, 2008

Program Summary

Interns will work with the City of Newton on a 2-week idea-generating charette looking at the village of Newtonville, which was separated into two pieces by construction of the Mass Pike in 1960's. All of Newtonville will be studied, with particular emphasis placed on the area roughly between Walnut and Harvard streets - adjacent to the Shaws Supermarket which projects over the Pike.

Issues include:

-Providing connectivity between the neighborhoods on the north and south sides of the Pike. The neighborhood on the south side (Newtonville "Square") feels like a walkable town center, while the neighborhood on the north side along Washington Street has a more vehicular feel. The two commercial areas see themselves as distinctly separate although they are part of the same ward (2). How can these areas be linked back together?

-Potential for a transit hub or mixed-use transit-oriented development. Parking supply in Newtonville is limited; however, the commuter rail passes through the center of the village, linking it to the greater Boston area. What would a new transit station or platform look like? What other program might be associated with the commuter rail stop? None of the commuter rail stops in Newton, including the stop in Newtonville, have ADA access.

-Potential for mixed-use development with residential component. Newtonville is one of four target neighborhoods that have been identified by the City of Newton as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Program recipients, a government grant program for lower income neighborhoods. Lower income residents are slowly being pushed out of Newton due to high housing costs in the Boston Area.

-Opportunity Sites for consideration include, but are not limited to the city-owned parking lot adjacent to the Shaws parking lot, the Shaws supermarket itself, the air-space over the Pike, and the commuter rail stop.

Sasaki Associates will distribute background information packages to the interns and organize meetings with the City of Newton Planning Department, Newtonville interest groups, and the MBTA, which has agreed to partner with Sasaki and the City on this study. Interdisciplinary professionals from within Sasaki will provide guidance and critique to the interns throughout the 2-week charette process.

Approach

Week One: The thirteen participants of this two week charette program will be divided into three interdisciplinary teams. Teams will begin by addressing the whole site at a conceptual level. Through a process of analysis, teams will develop an understanding of the complexities of the site and its context, and will prepare a conceptual development plan for Newtonville. The Teams will explore means of connecting across the Mass Pike, outwards towards surrounding neighborhoods, and to the larger region via the Pike & commuter rail, as well as address the key issues of transit, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, potential development opportunities, streetscape, connectivity to open space, way finding etc. This study should incorporate innovative sustainable approaches.

Week Two: On Monday, the group will synthesize their work into one coherent Newtonville plan. Participants will then break down into smaller teams and select one aspect of the group conceptual Newtonville Plan from week one. Drawing upon their diverse talents and interests, teams will develop a design concept at a detailed scale, illustrating how one part of the Newtonville vision may be realized.

Deliverables will require both team and individual effort and may include hand and digital plans, sections and perspectives, computer or physical models, Power Point presentations etc. Daily pin-ups will be held with all teams together to review progress and share ideas. The presentation on Friday, June 13th will be made to an interdisciplinary audience at Sasaki, including jury members from within Sasaki and the City of Newton Planning Department. The group will present the Newtonville conceptual plan from week one, and then each week two team will have 10 minutes for their presentation, followed by a 10 minute period for discussion. Afterwards, the teams will work together to assemble their work into a booklet that will be shared with the community. There will also be a final, out-of-house presentation to Newtonville interest groups in the weeks after the presentation on the 13th, at an open public meeting.

WEEK 1						
Sun 6/1	Mon 6/2	Tues 6/3	Wed 6/4	Thurs 6/5	Fri 6/6	Sat 6/7
	ORIENTATION & TRAINING 8:30 – 12:30 Interns are introduced to the office	SITE VISIT 8:30 – 10:30 Students visit site; opportunity for site photos etc PROGRAM REVIEW & SITE ANALYSIS 10:30– 12:00 First impressions, review program & begin production of analysis materials @ Sasaki 12:00 – 2:00 Lunch SITE ANALYSIS 2:00-5:30 MEETING WITH CITY OF NEWTON PLANNING DEPARTMENT & NEWTONVILLE INTEREST GROUPS 5:30 – 7:30 @ Senior Center in Newtonville	ANALYSIS 8:30 – 12:30 Student Production of Analysis Materials 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch 1:30 – 4:30 Student Production of Analysis Materials 4:30 – 5:30 Regroup for Team Meeting	IN-HOUSE PIN-UP 8:30 – 12:15 Pin-Up of Analysis Materials. Discussion: What are the "Big Ideas" 12:15 – 1:30 Summer BBQ CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT 1:30 –4:30 Formulate & test initial ideas. 4:30 – 5:30 Regroup for Team Meeting	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT 8:30 – 12:30 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT 1:30 – 3:30 3:30 – 5:30 Pin-Up of Newtonville Conceptual Plans with in-house jury & City of Newton Planners/Beer Friday	

WEEK 2						
Sun 6/8	Mon 6/9	Tues 6/10	Wed 6/11	Thurs 6/12	Fri 6/13	Sat 6/14
	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 8:30 – 12:30 Synthesize week 1 conceptual plan & site focus selection. Begin to develop individual concepts at site scale.	PRODUCTION 8:30 – 12:30 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch	PRODUCTION 8:30 – 12:30 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch	PRODUCTION 8:30 – 12:30 12:30 – 1:30 Lunch	IN-HOUSE PIN-UP 8:30 – 12:30 In-house pin-up and preparation for final presentation	
	DESIGN DEVELOPMENT 1:30 – 5:30 4:30 – 5:30 Regroup for team meeting. Identify key tasks and strategize production.	1:30 – 4:30 Production 4:30 – 5:30 Regroup for Team Meeting	1:30 – 3:30 In-house pin-ups 3:30 – 5:30 Incorporate Feedback	1:30 – 4:30 Production 4:30 – 5:30 Regroup for Team Meeting	FINAL VISION PRESENTATIONS 3:30 – 5:30 Feedback & Critique from City of Newton Planners and Sasaki Jury @ Sasaki	